

Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, Plant 4HAER No. CA-145-4-D
Worker Cottage (Building 122)
Bishop Creek
Bishop Vicinity
Inyo County
California

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94107

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Near Bishop Creek in North 1/2 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 19, Township 7 South, Range 32 East, M.D.M, Inyo County, California. Eastern Sierra Nevada approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the town of Bishop, California, and 225 air miles due north of Los Angeles.

Date of Construction: c. 1928-1930

Builder: Unknown

Present Owner: Southern California Edison Company
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

Original Use: Worker Cottage

Present Use: Worker Cottage

Significance: Building 122 Plant 4 (formerly Building No. 29 Plant 4), a small Period Revival Style cottage, is a rare, surviving example of early worker's housing at the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System. Built in 1905, Plant 4 was the first on the Bishop Creek System, and it remains the system's operating headquarters. This house is one of six in the Period Revival style in the System, and has never been expanded from its original dimensions. The Bishop Creek System is considered significant for its role: (1) in the expansion of hydroelectric generation technology, (2) in the development of eastern California, and (3) in the development of long-distance power transmission and distribution.

Report Prepared By: Thomas T. Taylor, Senior Archaeologist
Southern California Edison Company
Environmental Affairs Division
Rosemead, CA 91770

Date: August 27, 1995

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I. DESCRIPTION

Building 122, Plant 4 is a small, one story Period Revival style cottage located about 350 feet northeast of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System Plant 4 powerhouse on the east side of the main Plant 4 residential street. This cottage was part of a residential enclave of 12 houses, most of which have been demolished, where the Plant 4 workers lived (Photo 145-4-D-1). The project area is about five miles southwest of the town of Bishop, Inyo County, California. The Bishop Creek System is primarily located along the south, middle, and north forks of Bishop Creek on the steep eastern slopes of the southern Sierra Nevada Range. Plant 4 is one of five plants sited at varying elevations along Bishop Creek. Situated in the middle of the Bishop Creek System, Plant 4 is northeast of Plants 2 and 3, and southwest of Plants 5 and 6.

Building 122 is located on a lot sloping gradually from south to north. A low concrete curb separates the front yard from the main Plant 4 residential street that passes west of the house (Photo 145-4-D-2). A paved driveway leads from the street in front of the house around the north side to a two vehicle garage (Photo 145-4-D-3). The small front yard consists of a lawn, two large fir trees, several scrubs around the base of the house, and a concrete walkway from the driveway to the front porch. The spacious back yard consists of an extensive lawn and a garden area enclosed by a chain-link fence and the back of the house (Photos 145-4-D-4 and 145-4-D-5).

Building 122 is a one story, rectangular plan (22 x 32 feet), hipped-roof cottage built between 1928 and 1930. It is a mirror of the original plans for Building 116, Plant 4 (formerly Building 23, Plant 4) located across the street (SCE drawing 570952-1). These plans describe a screen porch off the kitchen with an outside access door; but the drawings clearly show glazing was intended in the porch walls (SCE drawing 570952-1). Building 122 sits on a concrete perimeter foundation. The original wood-shingle exterior walls have been covered over with asbestos shingles.

The exterior walls are pierced by narrow 4-light over 4-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows on either side of the 6-light three-panel wood front door, one 3-light over 3-light and a paired arrangement of two 4-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows along the west (front) end of the house, 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows in two paired arrangements along the north side, two 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows on either side of a small aluminum frame sliding glass window along the back (east) end, and one 6-light over 1-light and a paired arrangement of two 4-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood frame windows adjacent to a 1-light three-panel wood side door on the south side

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of the house (Photos 145-4-D-2, 145-4-D-3, 145-4-D-4, and 145-4-D-5). The windows have simple wood board trim and projecting sills. With the exception of the small aluminum frame sliding glass window into the bathroom, all of the windows appear original.

The steeply pitched, asphalt-shingled roof is finished with a boxed cornice (Photo 145-4-D-6). A small shed-roofed dormer with 6-light window and vents projects from the north side of the roof (Photo 145-4-D-3). The front porch, covered by a projecting hipped roof supported by posts, has a criss-crossed balustrade and central front concrete step. An iron pipe railing provides the handrail from the ground level to the porch deck (Photos 145-4-D-2 and 145-4-D-3).

The house has about 700 square feet of interior space divided into five rooms: a living room, two bedrooms, a bathroom, and a combined kitchen/utility room. The house's compact plan has no halls with the rooms opening directly one to another. The combined kitchen/utility room represents a very minor alteration from the original plan.

The 14 1/2 foot by 11 foot living room is, with few exceptions, unaltered from the original. The design of the 6-light wood front door with its distinctive vertical panels framed by the narrow 4-light over 4-light windows, and the paired 6-light over 1-light windows on the north wall clearly compliment one another (Photos 145-4-D-7 and 145-4-D-9). The long vertical panel theme of the front door is repeated on interior doors throughout the house. The living room opens internally to the kitchen and the north bedroom (Photo 145-4-D-8). The ceiling is acoustical tile; flooring is wall to wall carpet. A single electrical fixture in the center of the ceiling lights the room.

The kitchen departs from the original design by opening more fully to the utility area (identified in the plans as a screen porch), forming a 11 1/2 foot by 17 foot area (Photo 145-4-D-10). The door to the south side of the house repeats the long vertical panels of the front door, but without the finish details. The four 4-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows, grouped two to a wall, are exactly those shown in SCE drawing 570952-1. Built-in cabinets are suspended from the east wall and ceiling above the washer connections across from the windows in the utility area. Built-in cabinets surround the sink and frame the 3-light over 3-light, double-hung, wood-frame window above the sink (Photo 145-4-D-11). Built-in cabinets and a ceiling vent for a stove/range are opposite the sink next to the door to the south bedroom (Photos 145-4-D-12 and 145-4-D-13). The kitchen/utility area is lighted by two ceiling electrical fixtures, and a wall electrical fixture above the window. Flooring is linoleum; the ceiling is lath and plaster.

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The 9 foot by 11 foot south bedroom has a built-in closet/cabinet on the north wall adjacent to the door to the kitchen (Photo 145-4-D-14). Original 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows pierce the walls on the south and east sides (Photo 145-4-D-15). This bedroom shares the bathroom with the north bedroom. A single electrical fixture on the lath and plaster ceiling lights the room. Flooring was typically wall to wall carpet, although at the time the wood sub-flooring was exposed.

Although a bit larger, the 9 foot by 12 foot north bedroom is a mirror image of the south bedroom in most respects. The closet/cabinet (a mirror is attached to one door in this room), east window, walls, ceiling, lighting fixture, and doors are identical (Photo 145-4-D-16). This room has a paired arrangement of 6-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-frame windows on the north wall, the door through the west wall opens to the living room, and the wall to wall carpet is still in place (Photo 145-4-D-17).

Although probably featuring some upgraded fixtures, the 6 foot by 7 foot bathroom is in its original configuration. The aluminum-frame sliding glass window above the bathtub is clearly an upgrade (Photo 145-4-D-18). The arrangement of dual wall electrical light fixtures at each corner above the mirror over the sink is unusual (Photo 145-4-D-19). A single electrical fixture in the lath and plaster ceiling completes the lighting in this room. Flooring is linoleum.

II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Please refer to the "Historical Context" sections in the general report for Bishop Creek, Plant 4 (HAER No. CA-145-4) for historical information regarding Plant 4 and the Bishop Creek System.

Each of the five Bishop Creek power plants, and Control Station, was originally developed with an associated residential complex occupied by operating and maintenance crews; all have now been removed with exception of small remaining enclaves at Plant 4, Control Station, and a single house at Plant 6. Several of these houses, such as Building 122, Plant 4, were constructed during the 1920s to accommodate additional workers needed to operate the power plants after the final Bishop Creek expansion phase. Building 122, Plant 4 was built between 1928 and 1930 and is one of the few houses in the system never enlarged beyond its original dimensions (Theodoratus Cultural Research 1988:A-108). The company development of employee living areas, especially at Plant 4, permitted comprehensive planning seldom seen in

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privately developed residential areas during this period. The setting of Building 122, Plant 4 still retains many elements of the old residential planning in this area, including picturesque curving streets, houses sited on terraces with stone retaining walls, manicured front lawns with unified groupings of shade trees, and integrally designed lighting standards.

III. SOURCES

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IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This Historic American Engineering Record documentation of Building 122, Plant 4, a cottage at Plant 4 of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, was undertaken because the building represents excess housing. SCE is continuing to automate the Bishop Creek power plants.

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The automation of the power plants has made it unnecessary to have on-site crews, thus, residential units like this cottage have become obsolete.

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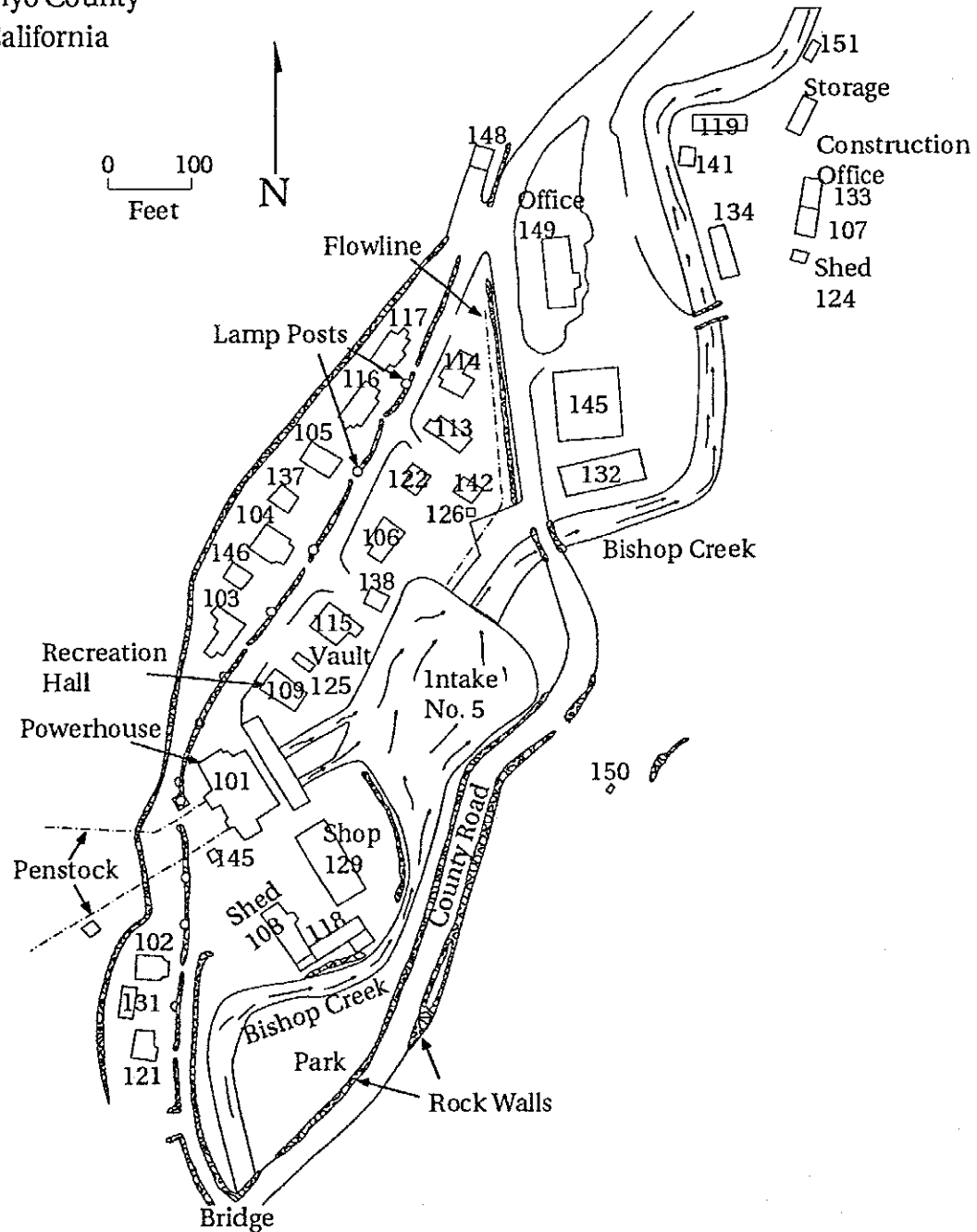
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